

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Applicant thanks the Examiner for discussing this case on 27-Feb-2006. During the discussion, Applicant and the Examiner addressed structural differences between the claimed devices and the Ochi reference, including the foam barrier and the boiling chamber. In addition, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the allowance of claims 1-10.

II. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection - Ochi

Claims 11 - 13, 15 - 21, and 23

Claims 11 and 18 recite an inflow pipe section coupled to the boiling chamber. As claimed, a portion of the inflow pipe defines a foam barrier located outside the boiling chamber and above and adjacent the steam outlet to burst bubbles exiting the steam outlet. The foam barrier provides an effective foam brake by breaking up bubbles exiting the boiling chamber steam outlets before the hot bubbles can enter the delivery pipe. (Specification, pages 1-2, 8). For example, Figure 5 in the application shows an inflow pipe (15) defining a curved foam barrier running above and adjacent to the band of steam openings (5).

Ochi does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter. Although the Office Action points to the both the suction pipe (7) and the nozzle (8) as inflow pipes, Applicant notes that neither pipe defines a foam barrier, or runs outside a boiling chamber above or adjacent to a steam opening. Instead, the suction pipe (7) is internal to the device, and the nozzle (8) is distant from the steam delivery tube (17). To the contrary, Ochi adds a separate shielding plate (21) to block large water drops. (Ochi, Col. 1, lines 53 - 57; Col. 4, lines 61 - 66).

Ochi is silent with regard to other claimed features. As one example, claim 12 recites an outflow pipe from the collection chamber back to the reservoir. In Ochi, the

receiving dish (12) must be manually removed and emptied - there is no outflow pipe. As a second example, claim 23 notes that the boiling chamber includes a projection above the steam outlet. The projection protects the steam outlet against dripping condensate. (Specification, page 8). There is no such projection in Ochi. Furthermore, claim 21 notes that the inflow pipe curves at least partially around the boiling chamber. Neither the suction pipe (7) nor the nozzle (8) in Ochi curve partially around a boiling chamber, let alone curve partially around a boiling chamber above and adjacent to a steam outlet.

Applicant therefore respectfully submits that Ochi does not anticipate the claimed inventions and respectfully requests withdrawal of the §102 rejections.

III. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection - Ochi and John

Claims 14, 22, and 24

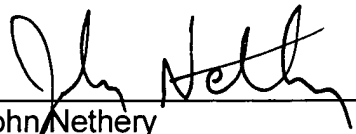
The Office Action relies on John to show a herb pot and a lid. Nevertheless, the Ochi-John combination, even assuming motivation to combine the two references, does not disclose the claimed subject matter. As noted above, Ochi fails to teach or suggest the features present in the independent claims 11 and 18. Although John shows a steam treatment device with a reservoir (11), heating electrodes (38, 39), and a permeable container (24), an Ochi-John combination still would not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter, including the claimed foam barrier.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the §103 rejection of claims 14, 22, and 24.

IV. Conclusion

The cited references do not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter either alone or in combination. The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the pending Claims are allowable. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney for the Applicant by telephone if the Examiner has any questions, comments, or concerns, or if a telephone conference would expedite examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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